Recent records of rare Lepidoptera in Trinidad

David J. Stradling

Euneca celma — a new butterfly for Trinidad

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WHILE collecting on Aripo Savannah at 11.30 on 30th December 1974, I came across a Nymphalid butterfly that was not described in Malcolm Barcant’s book, “Butterflies of Trinidad and Tobago”, Collins, London 1970.

The specimen, which was in poor condition, was subsequently examined by T.G. Howarth of the British Museum of Natural History in London. It proved to be a female of Euneca celma (Hew.) and previously unrecorded in Trinidad. The museum possesses specimens of this species from Colombia, Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia, but significantly not from Venezuela nor the Guianas; this indicates that my specimen was a vagrant to Trinidad.

The underside shows a close resemblance to the Rare Purple Eunica, Eunica excelsa, which is illustrated in Barcant’s book on Plate 20; it differs in that there is a wide white median band across the forewing. The upperside differs from that of other Eunica species by the white band and brown apical areas; the rest of the forewing and the hind wing are blue, rather than purple or brown as in other Eunica species found in Trinidad.

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1) Pteronymia arlena (Hewitson). Fam: Ithomiidae.
A male of this transparent-winged species was taken at Simla in the Arima Valley on 27th March 1976. Barcant (1970) figures this species and records the capture of a single specimen at La Laja Road on 7th May 1968.

2) Metamorpha epaphus (Latreille). Fam: Nymphalidae.
A specimen of this species, locally known as the “Rusty-Tipped Page”, was taken by Dr. R.D. Morris on the Santa Cruz — Maracas Bay trail in November 1975. Although the specimen escaped from the net and I was unable to see it, Dr. Morris’s description left no doubt that it was this species. Barcant (1970) regards this as a great rarity in Trinidad and records only four specimens.

Two specimens of this species, which is a new record for Trinidad, were taken during December 1975 from the walls of the Biological Sciences Department, U.W.I., St. Augustine. The genus Calionima of which there are three other local species are small (wingspan approximately 6 cm) brown moths with the forewing decorated by a silver discal mark. All four Trinidad species are figured by Seitz (1912). The two specimens of C.pan were determined by Dr. A.H. Hayes of the British Museum.